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Psychosocial Predictors of Rule-Following in Hostels for Women Experiencing
Homelessness

Abstract

This study examined the psychosocial factors impacting upon the rule-following behaviour of residents of a hostel providing crisis accommodation to women who are homeless. After their arrival, residents of a women's hostel (N = 83) completed questionnaires assessing the Theory of Planned Behaviour constructs of attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control (PBC), and intentions related to rule-following while residing at the hostel. Perceived resident group norms for rule-following were assessed also. Follow-up staff evaluations of the target behaviour were completed after participants ceased their hostel residence. As expected, attitude, subjective norm, PBC, and group norm significantly predicted intention to follow hostel rules, and intention and PBC predicted rule following behaviour. As rule following is a crucial requirement for continuation of their stay, these findings can inform strategies to improve the experiences and outcomes of women's short-term hostel stays.

Keywords: homelessness, women's hostels, theory of planned behaviour, group norms

Homelessness is a broadly defined term referring to situations in which individuals lack access to safe, secure, and adequate housing, or are living in a situation that is likely to damage health, threaten safety, and provide inadequate amenities (Chamberlain & Mackenzie, 2003). Characterised by no security of tenure, homelessness is a far-reaching social issue that impacts upon individuals, families, communities, and governments (Chamberlain & Mackenzie, 2003). Homelessness among women is an especially alarming issue as these women are increasingly susceptible to victimisation, including sexual assaults, physical violence, and other violent crimes (Baldwin, 1998; Nyamathi, Leake, & Gelberg, 2000; Roll, Toro., & Ortola, 1999). Numerous factors lead to women's homelessness, the most common of which include; mental illness, family or relationship breakdown, deficient social support, sexual abuse, lack of affordable accommodation, unemployment (Caton, Boanerges, Schanzer, & Hasin, 2005; Chamberlain & Mackenzie, 2003; Sullivan, Burnam, & Koegel, 2000), drug addiction, alcohol abuse, the transition from youth to adulthood homelessness (Herman, Susser, Struening, & Link, 1997), and domestic violence (Chung, Kennedy, O'Brian, & Wendt, 2000). Women account for 42% of the population who are homeless in Australia (Chamberlain & Mackenzie, 2007) with a range of associated economic and social disadvantages (Baldwin, 1998; Chung et al., 2000).

Australian government and community efforts to manage homelessness cost in excess of AUD\$348.8 million per year (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007). Nonetheless, the persistent homelessness crisis is, in part, attributable to a failure of governments and communities to understand fully, and address the underlying issues (Baldwin, 1998). Expanding current knowledge of the underlying issues that perpetuate homelessness especially as it applies to women is, therefore, an important endeavour. The present study sought to investigate the psychological processes involved in the rule-following behaviour of residents at a women's hostel; a behaviour that is crucial to maintaining short-

term accommodation in hostels and its associated benefits including access to services which provide longer-term specialised housing options.

Supported accommodation services, such as hostels, offer individuals without adequate housing the opportunity for respite from dangerous situations and access to amenities and services vital for securing further housing and overall wellbeing. People experiencing homelessness have rated obtaining housing as being particularly important for facilitating movement toward independence (Patterson & Tweed, 2009). The Australian government coordinates the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) which provides services such as hostels offering emergency accommodation to people experiencing homelessness or unsafe living conditions (e.g., living with a violent partner) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007). These hostels aim to provide their residents with a safe and secure environment which minimises the risk of re-traumatisation and reduces the exacerbation of existing issues. In order to establish and maintain a safe environment for both staff members and residents, hostels establish and enforce standards of behavioural conduct (rules). Rules implemented by hostels generally include curfews, prohibitions of all behaviour that is abusive, threatening or discriminatory, restrictions of drug and alcohol use, and a banning of committing theft within the hostel (Dalton & Pakenham, 2002).

In order to enforce rules, hostel staff members are obligated to administer consequences of rule-violating behaviour which include verbal warnings, written contracts and, in the case of serious or repeated rule-violations, exclusion from the hostel (Broadhead-Fearn & White, 2006). Rule-violations resulting in exclusion from a hostel severely limit an individual's available resources and opportunities to achieve vital goals such as attaining more stable housing, reuniting with children, and seeking mental health support. Women who have endured prolonged homelessness for a period of 6 months or more experience an increased severity of substance abuse issues and more assaults, legal problems, and suicide

attempts than do women who are housed within 6 months (Geissler, Bormann, Kwiatkowski, Braucht, & Reichardt, 1995). Understanding rule-following behaviour within this context, is, therefore, paramount to addressing the underlying issues that perpetuate homelessness. As rule-following is comprised of decision-making, employing a well established cognitive behavioural decision-making model, such as the Theory of Planned Behaviour, may be useful to understand rule-following behaviour in women's hostels.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB; Ajzen, 1991), an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), aims to predict both the intention towards performing a specific target behaviour, and the actual performance of the behaviour, by examining the personal and social factors considered influential in the decision-making process. The TPB specifies intentions as the most proximal determinant of behaviour with intentions being influenced by attitude (positive or negative evaluations of performing a behaviour), subjective norm (perceived social pressure to perform or not perform a behaviour), and perceived behavioural control (PBC; perceived ease or difficulty of performing a behaviour; also thought to be a direct predictor of behaviour).

Attitude, subjective norm, and PBC are informed by underlying behavioural, normative and control beliefs respectively. Attitudes are determined by behavioural beliefs, the salient (accessible) beliefs about the consequences (advantages and disadvantages) of behavioural performance. Subjective norms are a function of normative beliefs, reflecting a person's expectation that specific individuals or groups would approve or disapprove of their performing the behaviour. Perceived behavioural control encompasses beliefs about factors that facilitate or impede behavioural performance. Assessing the belief-based determinants of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control components of the theory of planned behaviour is important in that it can establish the beliefs that distinguish those that

perform or do not perform the given behaviour (Fishbein & Stasson, 1990). This information can then inform strategies and interventions to facilitate change in people's behaviour. A meta-analysis of 185 studies provided support for the predictive utility of the TPB, with the TPB variables accounting for an average of 39% of the variance in intentions and 27% of the variance in behaviour (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

The Theory of Planned Behaviour and Homelessness

Despite the extensive body of TPB research in a wide range of behaviours, few studies have focused upon the intentions and behaviours affecting persons faced with homelessness. Wright (1998) undertook the first known study examining homelessness related issues from a Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) framework. In this study of housing service utilisation, a significant relationship was revealed between intention to obtain housing for those currently experiencing homelessness and the subsequent behaviour of obtaining housing. Adding to the knowledge gained by Wright (1998), Christian and Armitage (2002) recruited 104 (mostly male) participants from various housing assistance services for people experiencing homelessness. Intention and behaviour towards utilising these services was examined using the standard TPB model. Results supported the TPB's predictive validity and also revealed an unexpected finding that subjective norm operated as a direct predictor of behaviour. Similarly, Christian and Abrams (2004) found general support for the hypothesised links of the TPB model in two studies examining the uptake of outreach services among predominantly male participants experiencing homelessness in London and New York. In Study 1 (London sample), attitude, subjective norm, and PBC predicted intentions and intentions and PBC (and unexpectedly subjective norm as a negative influence) predicted uptake behaviour. In Study 2 (New York sample), attitude and PBC predicted intentions and PBC (but not intention) predicted the uptake of outreach programs.

In a more recent example of a TPB study examining homelessness, Christian, Armitage, and Abrams (2007) recruited 188 (mostly male) participants experiencing homelessness for two studies aimed at furthering investigations of the predictors underlying service utilisation. The utility of the TPB was only partially supported as results of their Study 1 (based on an opportunity sample) found that attitude was the only standard TPB variable to predict intention. Analyses of demographic variables led to the finding that men were significantly less likely than women to report that social factors influenced their intention or behaviour towards service utilisation. Study 2 (based on a representative sample), revealed that, as expected, intentions were predicted by the standard TPB measures of attitude, subjective norm, and PBC, with attitude emerging as the strongest predictor.

Although several TPB studies have examined service utilization among people experiencing homelessness, it is also important to look at determinants of behaviour once longer term services are being utilized, such as rule-following behaviour to maintain stays once the services have been accessed. Broadhead-Fearn and White (2006) conducted the only known study to date that utilised the TPB to predict rule-following behaviour specific to accommodation facilities targeting individuals experiencing homelessness. The study recruited 70 (mostly male) residents of youth shelters for a prospective study. Partial support for the TPB was obtained, with subjective norm as a significant predictor of intention to follow rules. Self-efficacy, which refers to the degree to which an individual believes that they are able to perform the behaviour and is often equated with PBC, emerged as the strongest predictor of intentions and the only significant predictor of subsequent rule-following behaviour.

The Role of Social Influence Factors in TPB Homelessness Research

Given the differing impact of the subjective norm component in TPB homelessness research, a few researchers have drawn upon Social Identity Theory (SIT; Hogg & Abrams,

1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1979)/Self-Categorisation Theory (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) perspectives in an effort to better represent the social influence component in the TPB model. According to a SIT perspective, one's self-concept is derived, in part, from one's memberships in social groups and categories. When individuals define and evaluate themselves in terms of a self-inclusive social category, two processes are said to come into play. The first process is categorisation, the perceptual accentuation of differences between the in-group and out-group and similarities among self and in-group members on stereotypic dimensions. The second process of self-enhancement is the favouring of one's in-group over out-groups. According to SIT, when social identity is salient, the individual constructs context-specific group norms based on shared intra-group information and assimilates themselves to these group norms (Turner, 1982). In the context of attitude-behaviour relations, a SIT perspective to understanding this association is based on the premise that an individual's attitude and behaviour is influenced by the perceived attitudinal position towards a behaviour (group attitude) and behavioural norms (the belief that group members execute the behaviour themselves) associated with an important reference group (Terry & Hogg, 1996; White, Hogg, & Terry, 2002). It should be noted also that, while some studies have found the impact of group norms to be dependent upon the level of identification with the referent group (Terry & Hogg, 1996; Terry, Hogg, & White, 1999), other researchers have found that the impact of group norms is not necessarily dependent on the strength of identification (e.g., Johnston & White, 2003).

Studies drawing upon a SIT perspective in TPB homelessness research have shown mixed findings in terms of supporting the addition of social influence constructs to the TPB. Christian and Abrams (2003) found some support for identification processes in the homelessness context. The identification construct (perceived identification with care workers and social service workers) significantly predicted intentions and behavior related to

outreach program use for 126 people (mostly men) experiencing homelessness. In further research examining the TPB, homelessness, and additional social influence factors, Christian, Armitage, and Abrams (2003) investigated uptake of housing services among people who were homeless from a TPB perspective and incorporated the additional social variables of friendship group norm (perceived attitudes and behaviour of a referent friendship group), friendship group identification, and housing service user identification (the degree to which the individual believes they identify with, and benefit from, being a housing service user) as direct and indirect predictors of behavior. The study recruited 80 (mostly male) service-users (i.e., clients of drop-in centres, housing and advice services, and outreach support services) to participate in structured interviews. Findings revealed that friendship group norms and identification as a housing service user significantly increased prediction of both intention and behaviour related to the uptake of housing services. These findings provided empirical support for the notion that social factors may play a powerful role towards influencing the behaviour of marginalised groups, such as people experiencing homelessness.

Although Christian et al. (2003) examined friendship group norms among participants who may have prior and regular contact with each other, hostels (the focus of the present study) would not necessarily be predicated on known associations between residents, especially for those residents seeking refuge from abusive relationships where their normal living situation is not usually homeless. In the context of supported accommodation for women, then, an appropriate referent group influencing the women's decision-making is likely to be other hostel residents and the extent to which they are perceived to be performing the target behaviour (i.e., rule-following). Based on previous research demonstrating that people are more likely to perform a behaviour that is congruent with the norms of a behaviourally relevant group (Terry & Hogg, 1996), the present study included a measure of

group norm to tap the impact of an appropriate referent group (i.e., residents at the hostel) on hostel residents' decision-making.

Thus, building on previous TPB research examining the predictors of rule-following behaviour within supported accommodation (e.g., Broadhead-Fearn & White, 2006), the present study explored rule-following behaviour from an extended TPB framework (incorporating group norm) to examine a unique target population recognised as a marginalised group within society, women residing in a hostel. The samples in previous TPB homelessness studies have comprised a majority of males and, thus, it is important to gauge whether the same determinants of decision-making emerge when considering the impact of homelessness on females where there are likely to be unique factors influencing their living circumstances and associated accommodation decisions.

A number of hypotheses were examined in the present study. It was hypothesised that attitude, subjective norm, and PBC would predict intention to follow the rules at women's hostels (Hypothesis 1). It was predicted that intentions and PBC would predict rule-following (Hypothesis 2). In addition, it was expected that group norm (i.e., the perceived judgements of a behaviourally relevant group) would contribute towards prediction of intentions to follow rules in the hostel (Hypothesis 3). In an exploratory manner, differences in the underlying beliefs of the TPB (i.e., behavioural, normative, and control beliefs) between those residents who followed the rules and those who did not were examined (Hypothesis 4). The results of this final belief analysis can provide important information to inform the development of targeted intervention strategies to encourage rule-following behaviour in women's hostels.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited from a hostel providing crisis-accommodation to women experiencing homelessness. The sample group was comprised of a total of 83 female

participants aged between 18 and 66 years ($M = 35$ years, $SD = 11.24$). The majority of participants (85.5%) reported that their highest educational achievement was grade 10 or lower whilst a small proportion of participants (3.3%) reported having accessed post-secondary education through a university or technical college. Economic disadvantage was a consistent feature of the participants' lives with 80.7% drawing their income from government payments and only 12% engaged in part-time or full-time employment. A further 7.2% of participants received no government payment or income from employment. For a large proportion of participants, homelessness was not an isolated event with 67.5% reporting previous stays in hostels ($M = 2.5$ stays, $SD = 3.45$).

Design and Procedure

The main questionnaire study was conducted using a prospective design with two stages of data collection. The first stage of data collection assessed the standard direct and indirect (belief-based) TPB measures of attitudes, subjective norm, and PBC, the additional variable of group norm, and intentions related to rule-following behaviour. Stage two of the data collection process required hostel staff members to complete a questionnaire evaluating each participant's rule-following behaviour during their stay at the hostel.

Ethics approval for the study was obtained from the university's Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number 0700000656). Prior to the commencement of data collection, the researchers obtained signed consent from the hostel's manager confirming approval to collect data at the site. An information sheet detailing the study's main aims, requirements of participants and hostel staff was provided to hostel staff members. Hostel staff clearly stated that participation in the study was purely voluntary, that questionnaires would not identify participants and that responses gained in questionnaires would not be used by the hostel in any direct way. Hostel staff also stated that participants would be entitled to withdraw from the study at any time without question, comment or consequence. Participants

were given the option to complete the questionnaire independently, or with the assistance of a hostel staff member. The option of staff assistance was offered to allow women with limited literacy or comprehension skills to partake in the study. A thank you gift of AUD\$10 was offered to each participant at completion of the main questionnaire to thank them for their time. Follow-up staff evaluation of behaviour questionnaires were completed by hostel staff members after each participant ceased their period of residence at the hostel. The main and follow-up questionnaires were paired accordingly by matching corresponding codes located at the top of both questionnaires. Staff members completing the follow-up evaluation were provided with a tear-off section detailing the first name and first letter of surname for the resident that could be removed once the evaluation had been completed but ensured that the code, but no identifying information such as a resident's name, was linked to the evaluation provided to the researcher.

Measures

The current study examined a target behaviour relevant to the experience of women residing in hostels providing crisis-accommodation: rule-following based upon the rules set by a hostel. At the beginning of the questionnaire, participants were informed that they should respond to the questions based on the rules provided in their condition of stay document:

“You were given a copy of the conditions of stay when you came to the hostel. The conditions of stay state the conditions (rules) that must be followed by residents during their stay at the hostel (e.g., completing a daily chore, handing medications to staff)”.

Main questionnaire. Based on piloting, negatively worded items were kept to a minimum to aid participants' ease of understanding when completing the questionnaire, particularly in the case of participants who possess limited literacy skills or intellectual

impairment. A 7-point Likert scale was used to score most items, and an 8-point Likert scale was used when the response option of *does not apply to me* was included. Measures of TPB variables were based upon standard items devised by Ajzen (1991), and re-worded to suit the target behaviour and sample group used in the current study. Both indirect (belief-based) and direct measures were used to assess the TPB constructs. Consistent with TPB guidelines (Ajzen, 1991), these constructs were assessed separately and used in different analyses. A small number of negatively worded items were subsequently re-coded prior to data analysis so that all scale items were measured in the same (positive) direction.

Theory of Planned Behaviour Variables

Elicitation study. An elicitation study was conducted to collect qualitative information for the formulation of the belief-based measures (behavioural, normative, and control beliefs) used in the main questionnaire. The most commonly reported beliefs were used as the basis for items in the main questionnaire. Five women (M age = 34.5 years, range = 26-45 years) residing at the hostel were recruited to answer a series of written, open-ended survey questions exploring the perceived advantages and disadvantages of rule-following (behavioural beliefs), referents present in their lives who may approve/disapprove of their rule-following decisions (normative beliefs), and barriers that may potentially inhibit their ability to follow the hostel rules (control beliefs). Responses obtained from the elicitation study indicated that the main advantages associated with rule-following were: gaining life skills, avoiding conflict with staff and/or other hostel residents, and having a set routine. The main disadvantages to rule-following were: restricting time spent with people outside the hostel, and rules getting in the way of other daily activities. These responses formed the base for the behavioural belief measures in the main questionnaire. For the key referents perceived to influence the participants' rule-following, responses consistently noted the following individuals and groups: family members, friends, other hostel residents, and staff at the

hostel. These nominated referents were used to inform the normative belief items used in the main questionnaire. The elicitation study also sought to identify barriers potentially affecting the women's ability to perform the target behaviour. The barriers listed were: not having enough time to follow rules, laziness and lack of motivation, feeling sick or tired, and feeling emotional (e.g., angry or upset). These responses informed the control belief items used in the main questionnaire.

Intention. Participants' level of intention towards following the rules were measured using two items for the target behaviour (e.g., "I plan to follow the conditions of stay during my stay at the hostel"; 1 [*strongly disagree*] to 7 [*strongly agree*]). The two items were significantly correlated, $r(83) = .79, p < .001$.

Attitude. Attitudes towards rule-following were assessed using four 7-point semantic-differential scales (e.g., "For me to follow the conditions of stay during my stay at the hostel would be?" 1 [*unwise*] to 7 [*wise*]). The scale was reliable ($\alpha = .90$).

The indirect measure of attitudes, behavioural beliefs, was assessed using the question "how likely is it that the following would result if you did follow the conditions of stay?" Participants responded on five belief items (e.g., gain life skills) from information obtained in the elicitation study. These items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 [*extremely unlikely*] to 7 [*extremely likely*].

Subjective norm. Two items assessed the direct measure of subjective norm (e.g., "Those people who are important to me would want me to follow the conditions of stay during my stay at the hostel" 1 [*strongly disagree*] to 7 [*strongly agree*]). These items were significantly correlated $r(83) = .89, p < .001$.

The six social referents consistently listed in the elicitation study were used for the items measuring participants' normative beliefs (indirect measure of subjective norm). Participants were requested to circle their response to the questions; "how likely is it that the

following people would think that you should follow the conditions of stay?", on four 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 [*extremely unlikely*] to 7 [*extremely likely*].

PBC. The degree to which participants felt that they could control their performance of rule-following was assessed using two items (e.g., "It is mostly up to me whether I follow the conditions of stay during my stay at the hostel", 1 [*strongly disagree*] to 7 [*strongly agree*]). The two items were correlated significantly $r(83) = .54, p < .001$.

For the belief-based measure of PBC, the degree to which participants thought that five potential barriers, derived from the elicitation study, could inhibit their rule-following (e.g., forgetting the rules), was assessed using a series of 7-point Likert scales ranging from 1 [*extremely unlikely*] to 7 [*extremely likely*].

Additional Variable

Group norm. Based on Terry and Hogg (1996), the present study used two items measuring group norms (e.g., "Other residents would follow the conditions of stay during my stay at the hostel?", 1 [*strongly disagree*] to 7 [*strongly agree*]) The two items were correlated significantly, $r(83) = .65, p < .001$.

Follow-up staff evaluation questionnaire. Based on Broadhead-Fearn and White (2006), hostel staff members completed a questionnaire evaluating the extent to which participants executed the target behaviour once their residence had ceased. Rule-following was measured on a 4-point scale consisting of the response options; 1 (*no violations of rules*), 2 (*violations of rules were minor with no serious repercussions for workers, the hostel, or other residents*), 3 (*some violations of rules were serious enough to warrant consequences but did not result in the resident being asked to leave the hostel for any length of time*), and 4 (*rule violations were frequent and/or serious enough to result in the removal of the resident from the hostel either temporarily or permanently*). These 4 options were re-coded such that

scores of 1 were assigned a score of 1 (*did not violate the rules*) and scores from 2 to 4 were assigned a score of 0 (*violated the rules*).

Results

Data Analysis and Overview

Initial descriptive analyses involved inspection of the correlation matrix to identify relationships among the study's variables. A hierarchical multiple regression was conducted to investigate the utility of the TPB, including the additional variable of group norm, in predicting participants' intentions towards following hostel rules. In order to identify the contribution of the TPB and group norm to the prediction of rule-following behaviour (followed versus not followed), a logistic regression was then conducted. Finally, a series of multivariate analyses of variance were run to identify any TPB belief based differences (i.e., behavioural, normative, and control beliefs) between those participants who did and did not follow the rules during their hostel stay.

Descriptive Results

Just under half of the female residents in the study (44.6%) failed to follow the rules during their stay at the hostel. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed that, as expected, the standard TPB variables and group norm were correlated significantly with intention, with attitude emerging as the strongest correlate. In addition, all of the standard TPB variables and group norm were correlated with rule-following behaviour, with PBC as the strongest correlate. There were moderate correlations among the TPB predictors, with a strong correlation between attitude and subjective norm.

Insert Table 1 about here

Analyses predicting behavioural intentions. The efficacy of the standard TPB variables and group norm in predicting intention to follow rules at a hostel was assessed using a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Attitude, subjective norm, and PBC were entered on the first step of the regression, followed by the additional variable of group norm entered on the second step. The first step variables accounted for a significant proportion of the variance (72%) in intention $F(3, 79) = 66.69, p < .001$. Addition of the second step predictor of group norm to the regression equation accounted for an additional (significant) 1% of the variance, $F(1, 78) = 4.33, p < .05$. After all variables were entered into the equation, the significant predictors of intentions were: attitude, subjective norm, PBC, and group norm.

 Insert Table 2 about here

Analysis predicting rule-following behaviour. A logistic regression was conducted to examine the effect of intention and PBC on rule-following behaviour. Rule following (rules-followed versus rules not followed) was the criterion variable. The predictor variables examined were intention and PBC. A test of the model against a constant-only model was statistically reliable, $\chi^2(2, N = 83) = 31.78, p < .001$. The two predictors combined accounted for 42.6% (Nagelkerke $R^2 = .426$) of the variance in classification of participants who had and had not followed the hostel's rules. Classification was acceptable (77%), with 73% of non rule-followers and 80% of rule-followers correctly classified. According to the Wald criteria, both intention ($B = .97, SE = .44, p < .05, \text{Exp}(B) = 2.63, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.11, 6.23]$) and PBC ($B = .83, SE = .33, p < .05, \text{Exp}(B) = 2.29, 95\% \text{ CI } [1.20, 4.35]$) significantly predicted rule-following behaviour.

Comparisons of participants' rule-following behaviour. A series of MANOVAs was conducted to identify the differences in underlying beliefs between women who followed rules and those who did not. Rule-following (rules followed versus rules not followed) was the independent variable and each set of belief-based measures (behavioural beliefs, normative beliefs, and control beliefs) served as the dependent variables, respectively. In the inspection of univariate tests, Bonferonni adjustments were used to control for family-wise type 1 error. Overall, according to Wilk's criterion, significant multivariate differences were revealed for behavioural beliefs, $F(5, 76) = 4.30, p = .002, \eta^2 = .22$, normative beliefs, $F(4, 56) = 3.07, p = .02, \eta^2 = .18$, and control beliefs, $F(5, 75) = 2.89, p = .019, \eta^2 = .16$. Inspection of the univariate analyses showed that two of the belief items (getting in the way of other daily activities, having a set routine), and four of the control belief items (laziness, feeling sick/tired, forgetting the rules, feeling emotional) differentiated between women who did and did not follow rules. Although Wilk's Lambda indicated a significant difference for normative beliefs, inspection of the univariate tests showed that there were not any beliefs that differentiated significantly between participants who did and did not follow rules. Table 3 displays the mean scores of all belief items for participants who did, and did not follow the hostel rules.

 Insert Table 3 about here

Discussion

The aim of the present study was to examine the utility of an extended TPB model that incorporated group norms, in the prediction of rule-following intentions and behaviour in the context of a women's hostel. Findings from analyses revealed that the standard TPB variables (attitude, subjective norm, and PBC) were predictive of intention, accounting for

72% of the variance. The additional variable, group norm, made a small but significant contribution towards the predictive utility of the TPB model accounting for an additional 1% of the variance in intention thereby adding support to previous findings indicating the value of incorporating additional social variables into the TPB model (Christian et al., 2003; Terry & Hogg, 1996). Consistent with expectations, both PBC and intentions were predictive of behaviour. The present study also identified the underlying TPB beliefs (behavioural and control) that differentiated between the residents who did and did not follow the hostel rules.

Consistent with the TPB model's framework, Hypothesis 1 was supported in that attitude, subjective norm, and PBC predicted the female residents' intentions to follow the hostel rules. Thus, those female residents with a favourable attitude, who felt pressure from important others, and felt they had control over following the rules were more likely to intend to follow the hostel rules during their stay. This finding is consistent with some of the other studies examining service utilisation of people experiencing homelessness (e.g., Christian & Abrams, 2004; Study 1; Christian et al., 2007, Study 2) but contradicts the results of Broadhead-Fearn and White's (2006) study which revealed only partial support for the TPB in predicting rule-following intentions in a youth accommodation setting. It is possible that there is a more reliable relationship for adults in their underlying cognitions (e.g., attitudes) for rule-following that translate to behavioural outcomes given their greater maturity than among a youth cohort. Results of the present study also provided support for Hypothesis 2 with intention and PBC predicting the women's rule-following behaviour. The stronger a resident's intention to follow the rules and the more control they perceived they had over rule-following, the more likely they were to actually follow the hostel rules during their stay. The strong finding for the role of control perceptions on behaviour is consistent with Broadhead-Fearn and White's youth hostel rule-following study where control factors were integral in determining residents' rule-following behaviour. Overall, the findings of the

present study provide strong support for the TPB as a useful decision-making model to employ in this context of women experiencing homelessness.

Hypothesis 3, which stated that group norm would contribute significantly to the prediction of intention to follow rules, was supported as group norm accounted for an additional 1% of the variance in intentions. This finding supports previous research highlighting the need to explore further the contribution of additional social factors in the TPB generally (e.g., Terry & Hogg, 1996; White et al., 2002), and for TPB homelessness research particularly (e.g., Christian & Abrams, 2003; Christian et al., 2003). The finding that group norm was a significant predictor of behavioural intentions is congruent with findings of Christian et al.'s study of homeless service utilisation. In Christian et al.'s study, the appropriate reference norm that emerged as impacting on intentions was friendship group norms. Importantly, however, in the current study, there was still evidence of the influence of group norms in a situation without as much potential for established peer networks (such as those often facilitated via more permanent homeless living conditions). Referent group norms emerged as influential in the present study but were based on the perception of other (presumably unknown) fellow hostel residents' behaviour, most likely contributing to residents' decision-making about rule-following albeit without an established history of prior association.

Exploratory analyses (Hypothesis 4) revealed significant differences between the underlying beliefs of the residents who followed the rules, and those who did not. Female residents who followed the hostel rules were more likely to report that the advantage of establishing a set routine would occur as a result of rule-following than those women who did not follow the rules. In addition, those participants who followed the rules were less likely to believe that rule-following would result in getting in the way of other daily activities than those who did not follow the rules. Female residents who followed the rules were less likely

than those who did not follow rules to report that a number of barriers to rule-following (e.g., laziness/not motivated, feeling sick or tired, forgetting the rules, and feeling emotional (e.g., angry or upset) would prevent them from following the hostel rules during their stay.

Interestingly, the significant behavioural belief of rule adherence 'getting in the way of other activities' (i.e., identified disadvantage) could be conceptualised also as serving as a barrier that impedes rule adherence in this context. No differences were found in responses to the normative belief items between the women who did, and did not, follow rules. All participants, on average, perceived a strong pressure from important referents (e.g., family, hostel staff), to follow the rules.

The results of the current study suggest a number of avenues for the development of applied strategies to improve female residents' rule compliance within hostels. Positive attitudes may be promoted by emphasising the benefits of rule-following (e.g., establishing routines in a potentially otherwise chaotic environment) and downplaying the disadvantages (emphasising that there will still be time to perform other daily activities in addition to following the rules). Adherence to important others' wishes for rule-following to occur (e.g., hostel staff and other residents) may be increased via rapport building between hostel staff and resident women. Perceived behavioural control, which directly predicted both intentions and behaviour, could be strengthened by increasing women's sense of control over rule-setting by allowing them, as a group, to negotiate hostel rules (Goodman, Saxe, & Harvey, 1991). Women may also feel less likely to succumb to barriers preventing rule-following if they are offered support from hostel staff when necessary. Relevant support may entail assistance with completing chores (to combat lack of personal motivation, fatigue, or forgetting) and the opportunity to negotiate rules when unexpected situations arise (e.g., seeking an exemption from chore duty due to illness or feeling emotional). The significance of group norm as a predictor of intention among this sample may serve to strengthen

intentions and could be used when devising strategies to support residents in their efforts to follow rules. Facilitating a sense of a supportive group environment among the women within the hostel could be beneficial, which could be achieved via group discussions negotiating hostel rules, social activities, completing chores in pairs or small groups rather than individually, or initiating group rewards and punishment for rule compliance/non-compliance. Fostering a sense of community between the female residents could be achieved by applying group costs and benefits as a consequence of successful or unsuccessful rule-following.

Despite the present study's main strengths of the use of a prospective design enabling the measurement of observed behaviour and an examination of the cognitive-processes underlying the intentions and behaviours of an understudied group, the present study possessed a number of limitations. Only a relatively small sample of participants was recruited for the present study; future studies of this nature should aim towards a larger, more representative group across a number of different hostel locations. In addition, the high correlation between attitude and subjective norm indicate the possibility that participants may have been subject to social desirability response bias which may have been perpetuated due to questionnaires being administered by hostel staff members. Also, questionnaires may have been administered prior to women having had sufficient opportunity to fully realise the challenge of rule-following behaviours, leading to inflated scores on intention and attitude. Further, no interrater reliability information was collected among the different hostel staff members who assessed participants' rule adherence. Finally, this study focused on individual cognitive determinants only without a consideration of the broader contextual factors such as mental illness, unemployment, and domestic violence that may impact upon rule following decisions among this population.

Future research is needed to examine further the predictive validity of group norm in other settings reliant on people's rule-following compliance such as women's correctional institutions and in more general contexts such as classroom and recreational venues given that a consideration of referent group norms appears to add to the predictive utility of the TPB. In addition, other types of norms, such as moral or personal norms (i.e., feelings of personal responsibility or obligation to perform a behaviour; see Parker, Manstead, & Stradling, 1995), may be useful to examine in relation to rule-following intentions and actions. It is also important to acknowledge that the TPB is a model based on rational decision-making processes and does not take into account factors that may be particularly predominant within the present target group of female hostel residents; internal factors such as emotionality, compulsiveness, and habitual impulses (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Future research may wish to examine the impact of these constructs on women's decision-making processes in the context of homelessness. It may be particularly useful to examine the utility of intention implementation strategies (plans of when, where and how) to facilitate rule-following (see Gollwitzer, 1999). Intention implementation has been effective in assisting people with schizophrenia and impaired cognition (Brändstatter, Lengfelder, & Gollwitzer, 2001), and these conditions are likely to be present among some women experiencing homelessness.

Overall, the aim of the present study was to examine the factors that underlie rule-following intentions and consequent behaviour vital to the upholding of women's accommodation at hostels. The urgent need for examining this behaviour was made evident with results of the current study revealing an alarmingly high incidence of women failing to follow the rules. Women who fail to follow the rules face the harsh reality that their behaviour leads to expulsion from the hostel, consequent primary homelessness, and a serious threat to their personal safety and wellbeing. The development of strategies effective in

facilitating rule-following behaviour would enable women to maintain their stay at hostels and, in turn, maximise the opportunities and resources necessary for fulfilling goals such as obtaining further housing options. Further research in this area is necessary to work towards managing women's homelessness to produce optimal outcomes for one of the most marginalised groups in society.

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Table 1

Means, SD and Bivariate Correlations Between TPB Variables, Group norm and Rule-Following

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Intention	6.17	1.11		.76***	.71***	.69***	.44***	.46***
2. Attitude	6.08	1.21			.75***	.55***	.39***	.37**
3. Subjective Norm	5.88	1.56				.49***	.26*	.31**
4. PBC	5.83	1.38					.31**	.51***
5. Group Norm	4.91	1.45						.28*
6. Rule-Following	0.55	0.50						

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Note: Mean scores are based on 7-point scales except for Rule-Following (dichotomous variable)

Table 2

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Rule-Following Intentions

Variable	First Step β	Second Step β	R	R^2	R^2_{ch}
Step 1			.85	.72	.72***
Attitude	.38***	.33***			
Subjective norm	.24**	.26**			
PBC	.36***	.35***			.
Step 2					
Group Norm		.13*	.86	.73	.02*

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Table 3

Mean behavioural Beliefs for Participants who did and did not Follow the Rules

Behavioural Belief	Rules Followed <i>n</i> = 46	Rules not Followed <i>n</i> = 36
Gain life skills	5.11	4.72
Restrict time spent with people outside the hostel	3.65	4.61
Avoid conflict with the staff and/or other residents	5.46	5.33
Get in the way of other daily activities	3.11	4.42**
Have a set routine	5.52	4.28**
Normative Beliefs	Rules Followed <i>n</i> = 37	Rules not Followed <i>n</i> = 24
Family members	5.95	6.13
Friends	6.54	5.92
Other hostel residents	5.76	5.46
Staff at hostel	6.65	6.58
Control Beliefs	Rules Followed <i>n</i> = 45	Rules not Followed <i>n</i> = 36
Not enough time	2.29	3.06
Laziness/not motivated	2.29	3.72**
Feeling sick or tired	3.33	4.67**
Forgetting the rules	2.49	3.67**
Feeling emotional (e.g., angry or upset)	2.87	4.39**

***p* < .01